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Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains an account of new developments and the assistance accorded to Mongolia by the Secretariat and relevant United Nations bodies since the previous report on this subject (A/69/140) was issued in July 2014.

During the period under review, Mongolia has continued to receive international recognition for its nuclear-weapon-free status and to promote other nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Mongolia has continued to seek further institutionalization of its nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Government and people of Mongolia have received assistance from various United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes, including the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 69/63, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", the General Assembly invited Member States to continue to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of its borders, its independent foreign policy, its economic security and its ecological balance, as well as its nuclear-weapon-free status. The Assembly also appealed to the Member States of the Asia-Pacific region to support Mongolia's efforts to join the relevant regional security and economic arrangements. The Assembly further requested the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the aforementioned necessary measures and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and is based on the information concerning the implementation of the resolution received to date from Mongolia and from the Department of Political Affairs, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

II. Activities related to Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status

3. In 2016 Mongolia is celebrating the fifty-fifth anniversary of its becoming a Member of the United Nations on 27 October 1961, considered to be one of the major achievements of Mongolian foreign policy in the twentieth century. It opened doors for Mongolia to strengthen its position in the international arena and become engaged in international affairs.

4. Over the past years, Mongolia has pursued an active policy within the United Nations, making its modest contribution to promoting the Organization's noble goals. About 16,000 Mongolian peacekeepers have served in various peacekeeping operations. Mongolia has initiated and successfully promoted the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions on, inter alia, the right of peoples to peace, disarmament week, education for all, cooperatives, rural women, the rights of landlocked developing countries, promoting democratic reform and education for democracy.

5. As a demonstration of its commitment to maintaining international peace and security, Mongolia declared its territory a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone in 1992. Since 1998, the General Assembly has considered the issue of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and adopted resolutions on the subject on a biennial basis.

6. The present report provides an account of activities undertaken over the past two years in implementation of Assembly resolution 69/63.

A. Measures taken at the national level

7. At the national level, the State Great Hural (parliament) of Mongolia amended the Law on Nuclear Energy in February 2015. In accordance with that amendment, the relevant regulatory and promotional functions are allocated to independent but interrelated entities with distinct responsibilities: one as a principal watchdog for the maintenance of safety and security under the General Agency of Specialized Inspection and the other for promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and for policy development in that respect under the restructured Nuclear Energy Commission headed by the Prime Minister of Mongolia.

8. In June 2015, the State Great Hural adopted resolution 60, aimed at strengthening further Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. The resolution calls upon the Government to take robust action towards acceding to the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management as well as the Small Quantities Protocol. On 21 March 2016, the Government referred to the parliament the issue of accession to those instruments, for consideration and approval.

9. In July 2015, the Nuclear Energy Commission approved the Mongolian Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan, prepared by the relevant national authorities and reviewed by IAEA experts. That plan provides for the prevention of illegal movements of nuclear and radioactive materials, the detection and repression of nuclear threats, and appropriate countermeasures.

10. In 2015 and 2016, a Mongolian non-governmental organization, Blue Banner, organized national and regional round-table discussions to contribute ideas on practical ways and means of further institutionalizing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and shared its findings with the Government.

B. Measures taken at the regional level

11. A series of conferences and meetings has been organized during the period under review in the context of promoting further the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security. Thus, in June 2014, Mongolia hosted the first international conference on the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, in which more than 35 representatives of Mongolia and of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States of America participated. The third conference in the series was held on 16 and 17 June 2016.

12. In its Chairman's Statement of 10 August 2014, the 21st Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), held in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, welcomed Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and the 2012 joint declaration of the five nuclear-weapon States regarding that status as concrete contributions to nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of confidence and predictability in the region.

13. On 3 and 4 September 2015, in Ulaanbaatar, the Government of Mongolia co-organized with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines an ASEAN

Regional Forum workshop on the theme "Promoting the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia". Bringing together experts from member States of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the workshop provided an opportunity for the sharing of experiences and best practices, and contributed to promoting understanding of non-traditional cases in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and how they need to be approached, taking Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status as a case study.

14. On 26 November 2014, the International Conference on Dimensions to Create a Nuclear-Weapon Free Northeast Asia was organized in Ulaanbaatar by Peace Boat, Blue Banner and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. In its final document, participants welcomed Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status policy, both as a concrete contribution to regional stability and as an innovative approach to addressing nuclear threat-related issues. They also welcomed the 2012 joint declaration of the five nuclear-weapon States and expressed the hope that Mongolia's experience would be an inspiring example in addressing similar cases.

C. Measures taken at the international level

15. The final document of the Seventeenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Algiers on 28 and 29 May 2014, reaffirmed the ministers' support for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as its policy of institutionalizing that status. The Non-Aligned Movement has underlined that the further institutionalization of that status would be an important step towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime in the Asia-Pacific region.

16. At the request of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in February 2015 the Government of Mongolia prepared and submitted for circulation as a background document for the Conference a memorandum on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status (NPT/CONF.2015/8). It underlined the Government's resolve to continue its policy of institutionalizing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status by concluding an international treaty clearly defining that status.

17. Many Member States have continued to express their support for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. Thus, the President of China, Xi Jinping, during his visit to Mongolia in August 2014, expressed support for Mongolia's policy of promoting that status at both the international and regional levels.

III. Non-nuclear aspects of Mongolia's international security

A. Economic security

18. Mongolia is at the threshold of a major transformation driven by the exploitation of its vast mineral resources, and the share of mining in its gross domestic product (GDP) today stands at 22 per cent, twice that of a decade ago. The country's economy, however, is still facing challenges from persistent economic imbalances. Economic growth slowed to 2.3 per cent in 2015.

19. Practical measures have been undertaken by the Government to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth, and to promote the country's economic security. Thus, on 11 April 2016, the parliament launched Mongolia's Sustainable

Development Vision-2030, which charts the country's development path for the next 15 years, the period of the sustainable development goals. The Development Vision envisages Mongolia becoming by 2030 one of the leading middle income countries that has eradicated poverty in all its forms and preserves ecological balance while continuing to build strong and stable governance systems.

20. On 3 June 2016, the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations signed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2017-2021, which will guide United Nations support in the country over the next five years and marks a significant new chapter in the Government of Mongolia-United Nations partnership. It is designed to support Mongolia in translating the sustainable development goals and the objectives of the Sustainable Development Vision-2030 of Mongolia into actions. It is a result of intensive consultations with the participation of various national stakeholders, including line ministries and civil society. Fourteen United Nations specialized agencies will contribute to the implementation of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is expected to amount to $79 million for joint initiatives over the five-year period.

21. Promoting the country's economic security and preventing risks and threats associated with growth require concerted and cooperative action on the part of the Government, political parties, the business sector, research institutions, non-governmental organizations and the media. To that end, the Mongolia Economic Forum has been organized since 2010. Besides providing the opportunity for policy discussions, the Forum is of significant value for establishing extensive business networking, cooperation and understanding. Mongolia Economic Forum 2016 was held on 21 and 22 March 2016.

B. Human security

22. The national security concept identifies human security as one of the fundamental pillars of Mongolia's national security. Creating a healthy and safe living environment, ensuring food security, guaranteeing security of residence, and protecting persons from becoming victims of crime and assault are defined as the basis for ensuring human security. It should be highlighted that combating human trafficking is becoming a serious challenge. It is a relatively new phenomenon in Mongolia. According to studies undertaken by the non-governmental organization Gender Equality Centre, over 200 persons become victims of human trafficking annually. Although some measures have been undertaken in recent years, including the adoption of a national programme and the establishment of a system to monitor its implementation, the number of cases is on the rise.

23. Food security remains an important issue in Mongolia, not only due to the negative impacts of global climate change and environmental degradation, but also because of its own specific handicaps. Thus, the country is highly dependent on the import of consumer goods: over 70 per cent of the main consumer goods are imported. A special national food security programme has been implemented since 2009. In addition, over 20 programmes and projects aimed at promoting food supply and ensuring food safety and security are being implemented at the national and branch levels.

24. A series of workshops, training courses and television programmes has been organized on food security-related issues. On 22 and 23 June 2016, another training course will be conducted on food security issues.

C. Environmental security

25. Mongolia's developmental challenges are coupled with environmental problems, such as climate change, desertification, pasture degradation, natural disasters, droughts, the *dzud*, water and forest resource depletion, and air and soil pollution. Increasing consumption, economic growth and accelerating development of the mining sector are obviously intensifying the pressure on nature and the environment. Both sound policies and joint efforts are essential to meet those challenges. Over the past two years, Mongolia has continued its efforts to address environmental security challenges through expanding the necessary legal framework, organizing various meetings, and implementing national programmes and projects with the support and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme, other international organizations and donor countries.

26. On 14 May 2015, the Parliament of Mongolia approved by its decision No. 49 the State policy on forests. On 4 February 2016, it adopted decision No. 13 to include Noyon Mountain in the State protected areas.

27. At present, 27 national programmes and projects are being implemented in Mongolia in such fields as sustainable management of natural resources, forest and water policy and management, biosecurity, green development, and climate change and adaptation. In addition, nine new projects are being developed on environment-related issues.

28. Mongolia's Sustainable Development Vision-2030, approved by the parliament in February 2016, provides for action to preserve ecological balance while continuing to build strong and stable governance systems. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2017-2021, signed on 3 June 2016, provides, under its Outcome area 1 "Promoting inclusive growth and sustainable management of natural resources", for action aimed at supporting national green economy strategies, promoting clean technologies, reducing environmental risks and poverty in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining and industry, protecting ecosystem services and mitigating disaster risks, inter alia.

D. Information security

29. The protection of national interests in the field of information and guaranteeing information integrity, confidentiality and availability for the State, citizens and private organizations are the basis for ensuring information security.

30. Within the scope of the implementation of Government Resolution No. 312 (2011) on "Some measures to ensure State information security", a risk assessment of information security for the central State organs was conducted in 2012. Based on the assessment report, meetings and training courses on how to prevent risks in the future have been organized on a regular basis for civil servants.

31. MNSEC is the largest cyber security gathering in Mongolia and has been held annually since 2013. MNSEC 2015 was held in Ulaanbaatar on 29 and 30 September 2015. The event attracted about 200 people from the Government, private entities, Internet service providers, banks and universities in Mongolia who are engaged in cyber security. A wide range of discussions took place, including on the relationship between big data and security, malware associated with online banking and sophisticated cyber-attacks.

32. The Asia-Pacific Telecommunity organized its fifth Cyber Security Forum in Ulaanbaatar from 26 to 28 May 2014. The Forum was hosted by the Information Technology, Post and Telecommunication Authority of Mongolia.

E. Conclusion

33. The report of the Government of Mongolia on the activities it has undertaken in implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/63 demonstrates once again the country's resolve to fully implement the provisions of the resolution at the national level and internationally.

34. As a result of the country's consistent efforts and the support of the international community, the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia today enjoys wide international recognition. Although Mongolia has not been recognized as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, its unique status has been widely recognized as a contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and promoting regional confidence and predictability.

35. For its part, Mongolia is ready to cooperate with other Member States and relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies in strengthening the non-nuclear aspects of its security that would contribute to stability, greater trust and mutually beneficial cooperation in and beyond the region.

IV. Assistance provided by United Nations entities

36. The present section is based on the information received to date from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and IAEA concerning their respective assistance activities during the reporting period.

A. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

37. Mongolia is a landlocked country with a vast territory of 1.5 million square kilometres and a population of 3 million people. Its economy has been growing rapidly at more than 10 per cent per annum between 2011 and 2013,[1] mainly driven by increasing commodity exports. Economic growth slowed down to 7.8 per cent in 2014 amid declining exports from a continued weakening of the commodity market

[1] World Bank, World Development Indicators.

and slower growth in the key export market of China.[2] Growth is projected to fall to 2.3 and 0.7 per cent in 2015 and 2016, respectively, before an uptake to 2.7 per cent in 2017.[3] Similarly, Mongolia's merchandise exports had been growing rapidly since the early 2000s, but have been experiencing high volatility since 2012, with a fall of 19 per cent in 2015.[4]

38. The dependence of Mongolia's economy on the mining sector exposes the country to commodity price volatility. The share of mining in GDP stands at around 20 per cent, twice the ratio of a decade ago.[5] Furthermore, mineral commodities account for about 80 per cent of the country's exports and mining provides around 40 per cent of total Government revenues. Mongolia's exports are predominantly raw commodities. The three main commodity export items account for about 70 per cent of export earnings, while copper alone contributes nearly 50 per cent.[6]

39. As a landlocked country, Mongolia is physically isolated from major world markets and is highly reliant on its two immediate neighbours, China and the Russian Federation. Mongolia's main partner by far for exports is China, which accounted for 88 per cent of total export value in 2014, while China and the Russian Federation dominate when it comes to Mongolia's import markets.[7]

40. Regional integration is an important element of economic and regional security for Mongolia and there is a correlation between regional security and international security given the country's strategic location. Mongolia has recently made efforts with a view to achieving greater regional integration. For example, talks are ongoing on the creation of an economic corridor between China, the Russian Federation and Mongolia, and a road agreement between the three countries is to be signed. In February 2015, Mongolia signed its first free trade agreement, with Japan.

41. Mongolia and other landlocked developing countries, should aim to diversify their exports, focusing on adding value and linking into regional and global value chains in order to integrate into the global trading system. As landlocked developing countries, they should also look beyond their immediate neighbours and strive to diversify their export and import markets, supported by efforts to harmonize and simplify the legal framework on trade and transport, develop adequate infrastructure and implement trade facilitation measures.

42. Accession to and/or ratification and effective implementation of international conventions on transit transport and trade facilitation are one of the key means for landlocked developing countries like Mongolia to reduce transit transport costs and delays. Mongolia is a party to some of the key conventions, including the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, and the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets. In addition, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement has important provisions of relevance to landlocked developing countries, including Mongolia, aimed at ensuring a smoother, cheaper and faster

[2] World Bank, Mongolia, Country Overview.
[3] World Bank, East Asia And Pacific Economic Update April 2016.
[4] UNCTADStat.
[5] World Bank, Mongolia, Country Overview.
[6] UNCTADStat.
[7] International Trade Centre Trade Map.

flow of goods across borders. Mongolia is currently in the process of domestic ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.[8]

43. In a policy shift towards sustainable development, the Government of Mongolia has developed and, in February 2016, adopted its new national long-term development strategy. The strategy is to be implemented until 2030, which coincides with the time frame for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The strategy has four priority areas: the economy, social development, green development, and the governance and business environment.

44. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States continues to support Mongolia and other landlocked developing countries by raising international awareness of the needs and challenges of those countries, mobilizing international support for the landlocked developing countries and coordinating the United Nations system's response.

45. The Office supported the organization of the National Workshop on Mainstreaming of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries, held in Ulaanbaatar on 27 and 28 April 2016. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of key national stakeholders, including Government officials, civil society and the private sector, to mainstream and implement the Vienna Programme of Action effectively at the national level, taking into account the need for coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The key policy recommendations that resulted from the discussions were to set up a national coordination committee responsible for monitoring and reporting on the Vienna Programme of Action and issues connected with the implementation of other related international trade and transport agreements; swift ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; actions to diversify the economy and exports; enhancement of value addition; and continued efforts to strengthen regional integration and cooperation.

46. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States continues to provide substantive support for the operationalization of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, which is hosted by the Government of Mongolia and is based in Ulaanbaatar. The Think Tank will provide a centre of excellence for high-quality research and policy advice to contribute to the sharing of experience and the further strengthening of the capacities of landlocked developing countries. The Office also continues to advocate for the ratification of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, in order to make it fully operational.

B. International Atomic Energy Agency

47. During the reporting period, IAEA continued to support Mongolia in meeting its safeguards obligations and nuclear non-proliferation commitments. IAEA assisted Mongolia in enhancing its capacities for maintaining an effective State

[8] Information provided by the Government of Mongolia during the National Workshop on Mainstreaming of the Vienna Programme of Action, held in Ulaanbaatar on 27 and 28 April 2016.

System of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material (SSAC). In that respect, Mongolia participated in an IAEA course on SSAC, tailored for States with Small Quantities Protocols to their Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, which was organized in the United States of America in November 2014. Mongolia also participated in the IAEA Regional Training Course on Safeguards and Security Aspects of Nuclear Material Accounting and Control at Facilities, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in August 2014.

48. At the request of Mongolia, IAEA organized in Mongolia in June 2015 a National Workshop on Safeguards. The purpose of the workshop was to inform relevant stakeholders in Mongolia of various aspects of IAEA safeguards, with particular focus on the amendment of Mongolia's Small Quantities Protocol.

49. IAEA organized a Workshop on Research Reactor Infrastructure Development, Nuclear Knowledge and Education, and a Pre-Integrated Research Reactor Infrastructure Assessment mission in Mongolia in April 2016. The objective of the workshop was to provide guidance on the application of the IAEA Milestones Approach to planning, developing and implementing a new research reactor project, and its impact on safeguards implementation in Mongolia.

50. IAEA worked on the development of an Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan to assist Mongolia in applying a structured and holistic approach to nuclear security capacity-building, as well as enabling increased coordination among IAEA, the State itself and potential donors. The Plan covers all aspects of nuclear security, including human resources development, border detection and radioactive source security. Under the Plan, IAEA is assisting Mongolia in the development of a national nuclear security detection capability.

51. Since 1973, Mongolia has received continuous assistance from IAEA in the form of training, expert advice and the procurement of equipment through 73 national technical cooperation projects and numerous regional technical cooperation projects. The support was focused on human health, agriculture, geology, industry, environmental protection, nuclear safety and radiation protection. The current national technical cooperation programme in Mongolia is focused on human health, animal health and production, radiation safety and nuclear analytical techniques.

C. United Nations Development Programme

52. UNDP Mongolia supports the implementation of resolution 65/70 by contributing to Mongolia's economic security and ecological balance.

53. UNDP supports Mongolia in strengthening economic security at both the national and subnational levels by promoting inclusive and resilient growth. UNDP interventions are aimed at developing the capacity of the Government to address disparities, vulnerabilities and persistent poverty. Since the adoption of the sustainable development goals, UNDP has continued supporting the Government in ensuring the reflection of universal development goals, including sustainable development goals 1 and 10, in relevant policies and plans, and in strengthening capacity for data analysis and evidence-based policymaking.

54. With regard to ecological balance and long-term sustainable development, UNDP supports Mongolia in a range of environmental programmes:

(a) Mongolia has amended several environmental laws with UNDP technical assistance. As a result, Mongolia has enhanced its ability to monitor compliance with environmental regulations and strengthened the conduct of environmental audits.

(b) UNDP is also supporting the sustainable management of pastureland, water and forest resources, and the conservation of biodiversity. With UNDP support, participatory approaches and self-sustaining financing options are being applied for the sustainable management of protected areas.

(c) UNDP supports the Government in the implementation of national action programmes for combating climate change and desertification and in the development of nationally appropriate mitigation actions in the construction and forestry sectors. Directly linked to national security planning, UNDP has supported Mongolia in the area of disaster risk management. It contributed to updating relevant legal and policy frameworks, to facilitating decentralized disaster risk management through the development of subnational prevention, preparedness and response mechanisms, and to systematically engaging volunteers in disaster management.

55. In the cross-cutting area of democratic governance and human rights, UNDP supports the Government and non-government actors in a number of projects.

56. UNDP is supporting the capacity-building of local elected representatives for downward accountability, and of the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia to improve monitoring and reporting on emerging human rights issues.

57. UNDP has supported the parliament of Mongolia in improving legislative drafting processes, in promoting greater public consultation and policy analysis capacity, and in reporting on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

58. UNDP will support the Government's efforts to professionalize the civil service through legal reforms and relevant capacity-building of civil servants.

V. Conclusion

59. As described in the present report, various United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes have provided assistance to Mongolia in addressing the developmental, ecological, economic, humanitarian and human security aspects of its international security. The Secretary-General hopes that the assistance provided by the United Nations will further contribute to consolidating Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and achieving sustainable development and balanced growth.